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some of the puerile attempts of rationalizing the old Jewish beliefs and practices, but they represent, after all, an emancipation from blind beliefs and a progress of humanity.

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THE DEFENSE OF GOD AND OTHER PROBLEMS

A great contrast is offered to the Christian thinker in the discussion of the same or at least closely related themes by Principal Forsyth and President King. The former¹ is particularly concerned to justify God in view of the horror of the *sin* of the world which has culminated in the present war. The awfulness of the war and all that it implies weighs upon him from the preface to the last page of his book. President King, writing before the United States entered war, and much farther from its frightfulness, gives special attention in the first part of his book² to the *suffering* or *pain* which afflicts the world, although the problem of sin is not neglected.

In judging a theodicy it is well to consider at the outset what is wanted in a theodicy. It is that such considerations should be presented to men as should make it reasonable for them to believe that God is *good* in view of particular difficulties in the way of such belief. Forsyth undertakes this task in two lines of argument. In the first he shows that this war has arisen as a result of false ideas of God, and that doubt as to God's goodness, in view of the war, follows these same false ideas. In the second he undertakes to give us the certainty that his idea of God is the true one, by pointing out what he regards as the supreme action of God in demonstrating his holiness and goodness, in the cross of Christ.

The great error in recent thought about God, according to the principal of Hackney College, is that we have desired him to be on our side, instead of being concerned ourselves about being on his side. Our religion has been anthropocentric instead of theocentric. The explanation of Germany's action is that she has come to view the ultimate power of the universe as immanent and pantheistic, rather than as transcendental and personal, and that this has led to the worship of craft and power at the expense of humanity and every ethical principle.

¹ *The Justification of God; Lectures for War-Time on a Christian Theodicy.* By P. T. Forsyth. New York: Scribner, 1917. vi+233 pages. \$0.90.

² *Fundamental Questions.* By Henry Churchill King. New York: Macmillan, 1917. vii+256 pages. \$1.50.

With the foregoing criticism of some current religious ideas we shall largely agree. *Deep* thought is sure to reveal the shallowness of a divine love which does not insist on *righteousness*, and will readily agree that it would be most wholesome for men to ask more about what the holy will of God is, and strive to do it, than about what would be most pleasant and comfortable for man, and try to use God to gain it.

But so far from contenting himself with these considerations, Dr. Forsyth insists that there *is* no theodicy, no justification of God, apart from the cross. In various places he gives us hints at what he means by the cross. "The one meaning of an atoning Cross is the securing and establishing of God's holy and righteous judgment throughout the moral world to its victory in love—his bringing forth judgment to victory," he says. And elsewhere: "A holy God, self-atoned in Christ, is the moral centre of the sinful world," and yet again, "The cross meant more change in God than in man." These words suggest some more or less vague ideas, and raise many questions which the author signally fails to answer. In explanation of this lack he says in one place: "I feel, of course, that these statements rest on a theological groundwork for which there is here no space." That suggests one of the fundamental difficulties which students who admire this author's literary power and ethical passion have with his writings, namely, that he *never* has space for the theological groundwork upon which his doctrine of the cross rests.

In brief, we must say of this second line of Forsyth's justification of God (1) that it is quite unnecessary—the considerations previously advanced by this author, and others offered by President King in the book referred to, are sufficient for anyone who is willing to believe in God and able to think clearly; and (2) that, at least without further help which is here wanting, it is much more difficult to accept Forsyth's theory of the cross and its meaning than to believe that God is holy, loving, and good, and (3) that the hints which the author does give us as to his theology of the cross indicate adherence to theological formulae which have been seen to involve contradictions, or at least speculations which are without rational basis for us, and hence have had to be abandoned by students today.

President King's discussion of the problem of evil is not so saturated with the thought of the war, but offers, not one or two, but many, considerations which help to make it possible to believe in a good God and a good order in the universe in spite of the prevalence of suffering and sin. A helpful section in his preliminary considerations is con-

cerned with suffering in the animal world—with the idea of “nature, red in tooth and claw.” He quotes passages from Darwin and Wallace which indicate their view that the suffering in the animal world is very much less than it has been pictured, and that the evolutionary system with its struggle for existence “really brings about the maximum of life and of the enjoyment of life, with the minimum of suffering and pain.”

In his chapter on “The Prerequisites of Character” Dr. King holds that the development of human character involves “some genuine freedom of volition on man’s part; some power of accomplishment in the direction of volition; an imperfect developing environment; a sphere of laws; that men should be members one of another and that there should be a struggle against resistance,” and that every one of these involves the possibility of suffering and, most of them, of sin.

The section on “Light from Christ” is most helpful and illuminating. It is not “fireworks in a fog,” as Forsyth’s writings were once characterized. Every eye enjoys fireworks, but many would be willing to forego them if they could avoid the fog. President King’s discussion is simple, clear, logical, and convincing. A few pages of the same sort would have multiplied the convincing power of Forsyth’s doctrine of the cruciality of the cross. “If Christ was allowed to suffer and die in rejection and apparent defeat, your suffering too, though it were equally undeserved, does not mean that God has forgotten you or his kingdom. . . . The fact that Christ’s suffering death has so counted for men in all the generations since, is a very direct intimation that all suffering may be vicarious, may directly count for other lives.”

President King takes up other fundamental problems of life from the Christian standpoint, in the same simple, brief, and convincing way: “The Question of Prayer,” “The Question of Christ,” “The Question of Life’s Fundamental Decision,” “The Question of Life’s Fundamental Paradox (Liberty and Law),” “The Question of Christian Unity,” “The Question of Christianity as a World Religion”—the only hopeful basis for oriental civilization and for a New World civilization.

The brevity and simplicity of Dr. King’s presentations of the great problems of life and their solutions make this book one very suitable to be put into the hands of the thinking layman, while the learning and power of logical thought and expression embodied in it should make it very useful to the minister and theologian.

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